

Redmond/Sammamish: SR 202/SR 520 to Sahalee Way

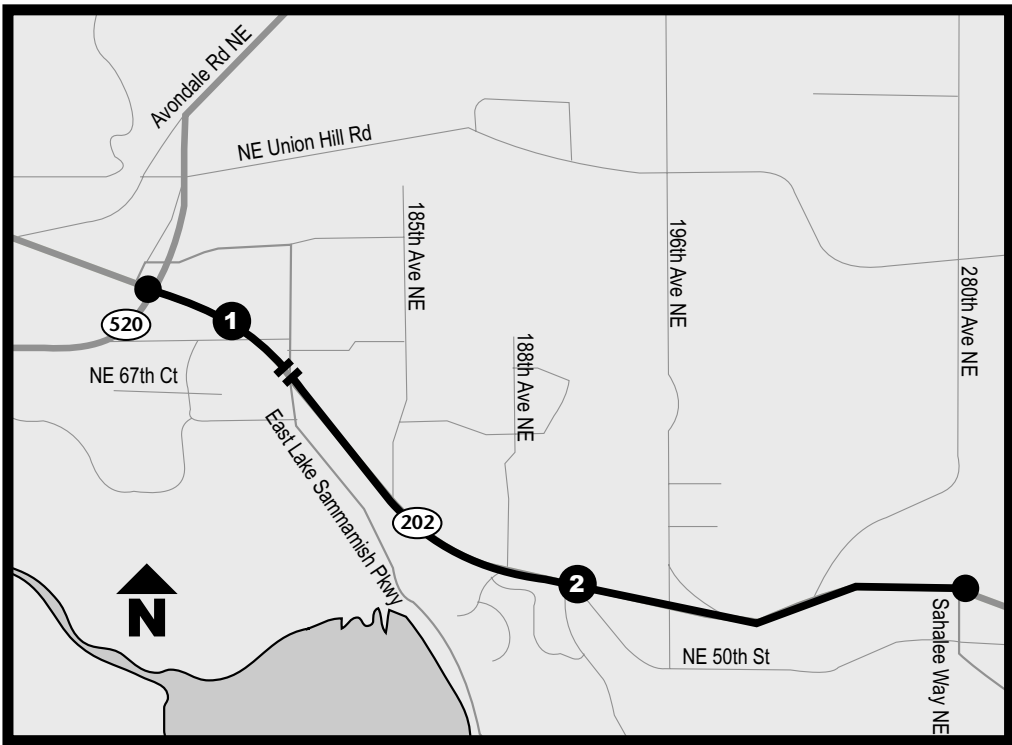
How could Initiative 776 delay the project?

Before Initiative 776 (I-776) passed in 2002, owners of small trucks paid between \$37 and \$55 in state license tab fees depending on the truck's weight. Truck owners now pay a \$30 state license tab fee. This reduced the amount of money available for WSDOT transportation improvements by approximately \$30 million.

To make up this shortfall, the Governor proposed shifting funds from other sources to avoid cutting or delaying projects. The Transportation Commission encouraged the chairs of the state House and Senate Transportation committees to pursue new revenue sources. In the event that the Legislature chooses not to take any action to address the impact of I-776, the Transportation Commission and WSDOT prepared a list of highway projects that could be deferred or canceled in order to stay within our budget. This list includes the SR 202 widening project.

Driving between downtown Redmond and the Sammamish Plateau using SR 202 has become a daily struggle for Eastside commuters. In the fall of 2004 WSDOT is scheduled to begin construction to widen almost three miles of SR 202.

The two-stage project begins in the commercial area of the City of Redmond at SR 520, travels through a small portion of the City of Sammamish, and ends in the rural area of King County at Sahalee Way Northeast.



Project area map.

What does WSDOT build in stage one of the project?

The first stage of this project improves SR 202 between SR 520 and East Lake Sammamish Parkway in the City of Redmond. It adds an additional lane in each direction, and improves the intersection of SR 202 and East Lake Sammamish Parkway. Other work includes signal improvements at the SR 520 off-ramp and at Northeast 70th Street.

What are the features of stage two?

The second stage extends from East Lake Sammamish Parkway to Sahalee Way Northeast. Project improvements include two new lanes, retaining walls, noise walls, and replacement of the bridges at 196th Avenue Northeast and at Evans Creek.

How will the project relieve congestion?

The project relieves congestion by adding one lane in each direction. The project also improves flow at intersections by adding turn lanes and installing new signals or improving existing signals.

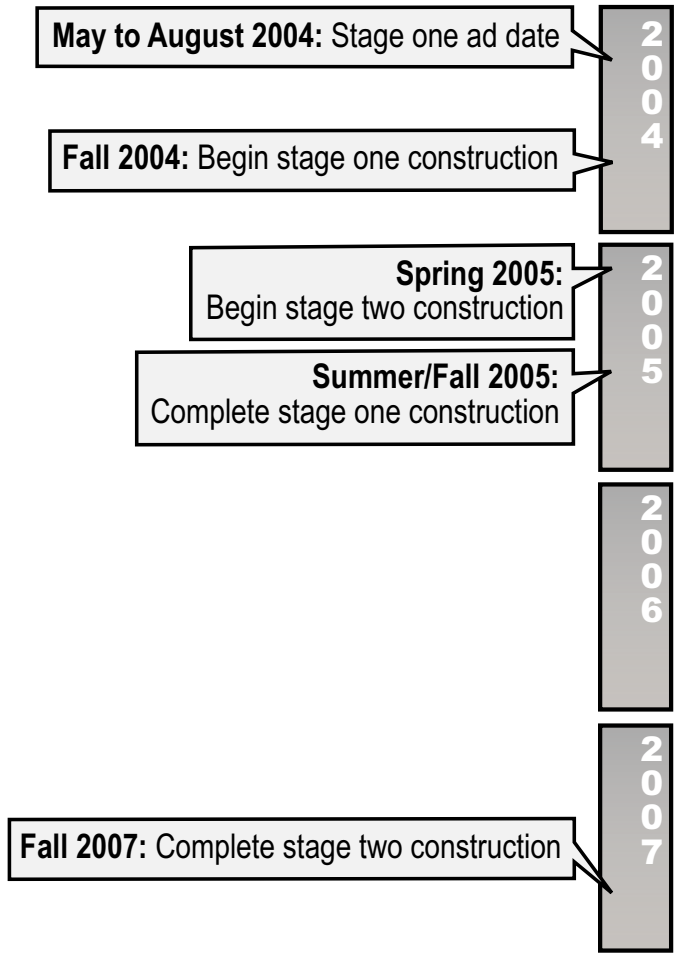
How will the project enhance safety?

The project includes features to improve safety on SR 202 for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. The project will:

- widen the road
- improve driving sight distance
- add turn lanes
- install new signals, lighting and signs
- add medians to separate opposing directions of traffic
- add new five-foot-wide sidewalks
- add new six-foot-wide bike lanes

What are the project timelines?

These dates could change due to a recent decision to put utilities underground:



How much will this project cost?

The total estimated project cost, including design, right-of-way and construction is \$62.8 million. The City of Redmond is responsible for \$3.3 million of project costs. They include:

- all illumination within Redmond city limits
- a new traffic signal at 187th Avenue Northeast/188th Avenue Northeast
- widening bike lanes from five to six feet
- median landscaping within city limits
- a planter strip between the sidewalk and the bike lane

Is the project on schedule and on budget?

The design of the roadway is nearly complete. WSDOT is currently purchasing right of way from property owners in the corridor and acquiring environmental permits for construction activities. WSDOT had planned to start stage one construction in summer 2004, but a recent disagreement over who is responsible for paying the cost to put utilities underground pushed the start of the project until fall 2004. The project is currently within budget.

What delayed the project?

A City of Redmond land use ordinance requires relocated utilities to be located underground. Redmond asked WSDOT and the electrical utility to share the costs of the relocation. The city believes that the state Growth Management Act requires WSDOT to comply with their local land use ordinance. Based on a Washington State Supreme Court decision (Hwy. Com. v. Pac. NW Bell Tel. Co. [59 Wn. (2d) Dec. 1961]) the Washington State Attorney General’s office advised WSDOT that we cannot use motor vehicle funds to relocate utility facilities impacted by highway construction. This difference of opinion delayed the project.

How do utilities impact highway construction projects?

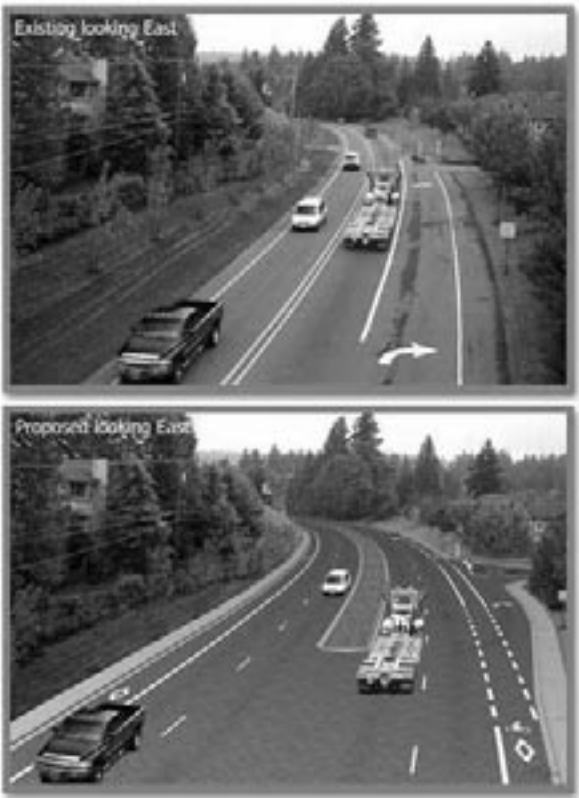
Utility wires, poles, boxes and other facilities are often located on WSDOT property adjacent to highways. Washington State allows utility companies to use this land as long as they are willing to move their poles, underground wires, and other facilities out of the way to make room for highway improvement or repair projects. Utility poles and wires line SR 202 and must be moved either outside of the widened roadway or underground.

The Washington State Department of Transportation previously requested that Puget Sound Energy relocate utility poles and wires outside of the widened roadway. The City of Redmond prefers underground utilities, at a cost of \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million. The city will pay their

portion of the cost to put utilities underground but reserves the right to attempt to recover the costs of undergrounding utilities from WSDOT.

What impact do underground utilities have on our project schedule?

Placing utilities underground costs significantly more than simply relocating utility poles. For this project it requires construction of utility vaults outside of state-owned right of way. This requires Puget Sound Energy to acquire more than a dozen utility easements on private property in both stages of the project. This easement acquisition will force a one to four month delay in the start of the construction.



SR 202 widening at vicinity of 187th Ave NE.